

Business One Stop

Virginia Department of Business Assistance
www.virginia.gov/bos

Virginia's Business One Stop system is a service provided by the Virginia Department of Business Assistance. The purpose of the Business One Stop is to accelerate business formation in the Commonwealth and thereby contribute to our economic prosperity. The Business One Stop's Business Wizard provides specific licensing, permitting and registration requirements for the user's business situation and assists with partial completion of the necessary forms. As long as a user provides the system with complete and accurate information, the New Business Wizard will walk the user through the entire process of establishing a new business in Virginia, ensuring that each step is completed in the proper order.

The Business One Stop website is by its own admission a work in progress. While the goal is to have a “one-stop-shop” for entrepreneurs as they attempt to start a new business in Virginia, there are a number of items that are not currently available for completion on the website. Bringing more partners on board in cooperation between the Department of Business Assistance, state agencies and the localities is being worked on in order to make every license, permit and registration accessible in one place – improvement in technology in other agency programs must be put in place first in some instances. Additionally, not all types of businesses are supported by the Business One Stop website. More information and features will be required to allow the program to work for farmers and agribusiness.

The Governor’s Commission on Government Reform and Restructuring, in conjunction with the Governor’s Commission on Job Creation and Economic Development, should evaluate the current system to find areas to improve. The Governor’s 2010 Jobs and Opportunity agenda, as approved by the General Assembly, included \$1 million in funding for the Department of Business Assistance to support the Business One Stop program and its improvements.

Below is a list of items that the commissions should consider recommending for improvement to the Business One Stop program.

- Significantly enhance the “Virginia Business One Stop” website into a “First and Only Stop” by increasing the information, resources, and assistance available to Virginia entrepreneurs to ensure that truly only one stop is necessary to get a new business up and running with minimal delay.
- Virginia needs to do a better job linking similar state and local requirements through Virginia’s Business One Stop website so that information need be entered only once.
- Communicate and coordinate with all state agencies and localities to ensure necessary forms and information are provided.
- Incentivize local governments to post business forms and required submissions in a searchable, easy-to-use format.
- Consider ways to address the issue of access fees as they turn away potential users.
- Include online exemptions for veterans from paying the Department of Business Assistance's handling fee when establishing a small business through the one-stop small business permitting program as prescribed in successful 2010 legislation (SB455 and HB262).
- Make improvements so new farms and other agribusinesses can also use the Business One Stop program. These businesses often require additional permits and licenses that are not currently available through the program.